



Iowa DNR News

Environmental Services Division

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DNR ADDS WATERSHED PROJECTS TO NOTE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION WEEK

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DES MOINES — As the DNR marks Soil and Water Conservation Week in Iowa next week, it is adding to its work with Iowans to make differences on the land and in the water.

The DNR is recommending that the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) approve grants for ongoing efforts and six new watershed projects that will improve Iowa's streams, rivers and lakes.

The grants, from the DNR's Watershed Improvement Program, will be awarded to local groups to organize watershed projects. Those projects help landowners use conservation practices to keep soil in our fields and soil, nutrients and bacteria out of our water.

"Soil and Water Conservation Week is a great opportunity to thank Iowans for the time and money they spend in improving their land which improves our streams, rivers and lakes," said Rich Leopold, director of the DNR. "While we recognize we still have a lot of work left to do, these grants are another way we at the DNR can help Iowans make a difference."

The DNR will recommend that the EPC approve the following projects at its January meeting:

- **Nutting Creek Watershed Project, Fayette County:**
This project will work with livestock operators in the watershed to reduce livestock's impact on the stream.

- **Walnut Creek Watershed Quality Improvement Project, Poweshiek County:**
This project will work to reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients reaching the stream, which leads to the Iowa River.
- **Prairie Creek Water Quality Project, Clinton County:**
This project will help improve the quality of water entering the Maquoketa River and Mississippi River by helping landowners use conservation practices in priority areas.
- **Union Grove Lake Nonpoint Source Watershed Project, Tama County**
This project will help reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients entering this lake in Union Grove State Park, a popular spot for recreation.
- **Prairie Rose Lake Water Quality Project, Shelby County**
This project will work to reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients, and in turn, algae, in this state park lake in western Iowa.
- **Littlefield Lake Nonpoint Source Watershed Project, Audubon County**
This project will work to reduce sediment and phosphorus in this western Iowa lake.
- **Water Quality in Rathbun Lake, Wayne County:**
While the Rathbun Lake project is ongoing, the grant will allow the project to work with two new priority areas in the large watershed.
- **Mink Creek Watershed Project, Fayette County:**
The grant will extend the project along Mink Creek, a trout stream, for an additional year.

Much of the work will be accomplished through the DNR's partnerships with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, housed in county U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service offices. Districts often take the lead on projects, working with local landowners who voluntarily make improvements on their land.

These individual efforts are important since more than 90 percent of Iowa's landscape is privately owned and managed. The efforts of each individual acting responsibly are critical for improving Iowa's lakes, streams and rivers. Organized watershed projects can help make conservation practices easier to implement for landowners.

Governor Chet Culver proclaimed Nov. 25 – Dec. 1, 2007 as "Soil and Water Conservation Week" in Iowa to be celebrated throughout the state as an expression of gratitude to those who volunteer time, talent and leadership to protect our soil and water resources.

The DNR funds about 50 ongoing watershed projects throughout Iowa. The Watershed Improvement Program works with staff from DNR fisheries, wildlife, forestry, water monitoring, water quality and other programs to provide technical assistance to watershed projects, landowners and citizens.

The Section 319 program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provides DNR funding for nonpoint pollution programs. The DNR generally funds local watershed projects in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Natural Resources Conservation Service which also provide technical assistance to landowners.

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